



PRIME MINISTER

E. & O.E. - PROOF ONLY

TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS CONFERENCE, CABLE BEACH HOTEL, NASSAU
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JOURNALIST: What came out of your meeting with the Secretary-General?

PM: Well, we had a very useful discussion about how he saw the structure of the meeting. And it is quite clear that the issue of Southern Africa will be the most important item at this meeting. We went over the timetabling of that. And I don't think it is a matter which will be resolved at the beginning of the meeting, although it will come up, I would think, on the first day. It is an issue which will require, I think, an amount of discussion at the retreat over the week.

JOURNALIST: Did he express concern that Britain might not be willing to co-operate in sanctions against South Africa?

PM: Obviously the position of Britain was one of the matters discussed by us, but we have common ground that the ideal position is one where out of discussion Britain will see the merit of having a united Commonwealth view, which will involve increased pressure in a number of ways upon South Africa to try and achieve a position leading towards the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa and a timetable under which South Africa can move to the emergence of a free and liberal society. Now, no-one, including myself, as I made clear from the beginning, has come to this conference with a view to trying to isolate or attack Britain. Rather, what we want to do is by the force and power of argument to achieve a situation where we can get a common position.

JOURNALIST: Did you explain Australia's idea of a committee? And, if so, what was Mr Ramphal's response?

PM: I outlined that that was part of an overall Australian approach and the Secretary-General indicated that he thought this was a very appropriate part of an overall mechanism, you like, to deal with this fundamental issue.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, is winning Mrs Thatcher over now the main aim of this meeting?

PM: Well, let me say this, that in the past the Commonwealth has acted on the basis of consensus and it is infinitely preferable that that be achieved on this occasion. And I am hopeful that it can be done.

JOURNALIST: Do you think you can persuade Mrs Thatcher?

PM: I don't want to over-rate or over-state my own role. Clearly Australia, through myself, is going to have an important role in this debate and the emergence of the Commonwealth position. That has been recognised and accepted. I hope by my contribution to be able to play some part in achieving the consensus which clearly has the position of Britain as an integral, important part of achieving consensus. So I will play my part, I hope, in the persuasive process.

JOURNALIST: bilaterally to some of the voters, like Canada and New Zealand. Will you be speaking bilaterally before the conference starts with Mrs Thatcher?

PM: I would think so, yes.

JOURNALIST: Do you think there is a chance, Mr Hawke, of persuading Mrs Thatcher to accept the more limited sanctions that general sanctions which are being proposed by Mr Ramphal?

PM: Let me make it clear. Mr Ramphal is not talking about comprehensive mandatory sanctions. And nor do I believe that that's the approach which is achievable or appropriate. It seems to me that rather we ought to be talking at those sort of areas where, at this stage, you ought to be able to get very general agreement, to be looking at a graduated process. But that all being done was the element of an approach which says - look we are not just talking about sanctions, about economic pressures. As I have said at all times, it would be much better if you didn't have to resort to sanctions at all. It would be much better if you could get the South African regime to understand the increasing repugnance of the world to the operation of the apartheid system and to them to understand that they ought to start to talk to all the elements within South Africa who are going to be important in achieving a new South Africa. Now, that is what I have been talking about, and will here talk about, the concept of a group of eminent persons who will have the responsibility of addressing themselves to the process of change. And in doing that, also talking to the various elements including the South African regime to try and get an acceptance of the position that change voluntarily moved to is better than something which is going to involve sanctions external pressures because, if that is the route that you had to go down then it is much more likely in that process that you are not going to be able to get to a resolution of the problem. I think that is the approach that we should take.

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JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, Glen Ella says South Africa is not a bad place. What do you think of that?

PM: Well, I have not seen what Glen Ella has said. And I don't want to involve myself in any observations about Glen. I think that the world has an overwhelming amount of evidence that the society of South Africa is totally objectionable and unacceptable to the civilised world.

JOURNALIST: Has he embarrassed you this week?

PM: No, he hasn't embarrassed me.

JOURNALIST: Why did the Government, Mr Hawke, not put more pressure on the Rugby Union to ban these players?

PM: Well, that's something that I would rather leave for a later date. I have at this stage no reason to believe that the Australian Rugby Union is going to participate or condone Australian involvement at an official level, a team level in competition with South Africa, but the Minister as you know, has written to the Australian Rugby Union, and I am optimistic that out of the discussions that will take place between the Minister and the Rugby Union that we will not have any infringement at that level of the Gleneagles Agreement.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, have you been kept abreast of developments on the Trien Jaya border and is there cause for concern?

PM: No, all I have seen at this stage is the reference to twelve, I think, individuals. That is an initial cable that I have got. I will certainly be seeking to remain fully informed, but I have no more details at this stage.

JOURNALIST: Do you think the frontline states in Africa will support the committee process? It would seem to be, at least superficially, a softening of their hardline position to dismantle apartheid now, as they have said.

PM: No, but I think, Greg, that that question in that form mis-understands what we are talking about. If we were just talking about a committee process, then I believe that it would be unacceptable. But it is as part of an overall approach which addresses ourselves to the question of how in an acceptable and an effective way we seek to increase economic pressure. But in that context, having the committee of eminent persons who would be addressing themselves to the processes of change, I think within that context, not only will it be acceptable, but will be welcomed.

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